

Stated Meeting, March 15.

Present, sixteen members.

Dr. BACHE, Vice-President, in the Chair.

Letters were received:—

From Chief Justice Taney, dated Baltimore, March 9, 1844, in acknowledgment of his election as a member of the Society:—

From the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham, and Newcastle upon Tyne, dated Newcastle, Dec. 29, 1842, acknowledging the receipt of the Proceedings of the Society:—

From John B. Sartori, dated Leghorn, Jan. 11, 1844, returning thanks, on the part of his Imperial and Royal Highness, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, for the Transactions of the Society, and in relation to certain other packages sent to M. Sartori's care.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

Flora Batava, ou Figures et Descriptions de Plantes Beligiques. Par Kops et Vander Trappen. Nos. 130 to 131. Amsterdam. 4to.

From H. M. the King of the Netherlands.

Reports of the Natural History Society of the Counties of Northumberland, Durham, and Newcastle upon Tyne. For the Years 1831, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1840, 1841. 8vo.—*From the Society.*

A Catalogue of the Generic and Sub-generic Types of the Class Aves, Birds, arranged according to the Natural System. Newcastle, 1840. 8vo.—*From the same.*

Tijdschrift voor Natuurlijke Geschiedenis en Physiologie. Tiende Deel. 4^e Stuk. Leiden, 1843. 8vo.—*From the Editors, Van der Hoeven and De Vriese.*

Erster Zusatz zu der Schrift: Ueber den Galvanismus als Chemisches Heilmittel u. s. w. Von Dr. Gustav Crusell. St. Petersburg, 1842. 8vo.—*From the Author.*

Quadro Geografico-Ornitologica ossiù Quadro Comparativo le Ornitologie di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Liguria, Nizza, e la

Provincia di Gard. Compilato da Antonio Schembri. Malta, 1843. 4to.—*From the Author.*

The Medical News and Library. Vol. II. March, 1844. No. 15. 8vo.—*From Messrs. Lea & Blanchard.*

FOR THE CABINET.

A Specimen of Dodecaedral Oxide of Iron, from Berks County, Pennsylvania.—*From J. C. Trautwine.*

Thirty-three Specimens of Fossils from the Himalaya and Sevalik Hills. Collected by the Rev. James R. Campbell, Missionary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, at Saharumpur, Upper India. *From the Rev. Theodore W. J. Wylie.*

Mr. Dillingham, pursuant to appointment, read an obituary notice of Judge Gaston.

The life of Judge Gaston, Mr. Dillingham said, should be written for the special benefit of the cause of religious toleration. He was himself a Catholic, and the champion of toleration; his ancestors were Huguenots, and had been driven from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. They sought refuge in Ireland, where his father was born, and where his uncle, the Rev. Hugh Gaston, was a Presbyterian clergyman, eminent for piety and learning, and the author of a religious work* of high authority. Dr. Alexander Gaston, the father, received his professional education in the medical school at Edinburgh, and was subsequently appointed a surgeon in the British navy, but early in life came to this country, and settled at Newbern, North Carolina. He was distinguished among the patriots of the revolution, was a member of the committee of safety, and served in the army,—at times in his professional capacity, and once in the command of a body of volunteers, which led to his early and tragical death. He was shot in the presence of his wife and family, under circumstances which indicate the character of the strife between the whigs and tories of the revolution. He left a widow and two children, one of them, the subject of this notice, but three years old.

Judge Gaston was born at Newbern, N. C., on the 19th of Sept. 1778. His mother was of the Roman Catholic faith. She was distinguished for prudence, intelligence, and accomplishments, and, by common consent, moulded the character of her son for that high destiny which he subsequently attained. A disposition, in childhood,

* "Gaston's Concordance"

“volatile and irritable,” was so trained as to become a pattern of patience and perseverance. At the age of thirteen he was sent to the College at Georgetown, where, in the course of two years, by assiduous study, he became deeply imbued with a love for the ancient classics. Much stress is laid upon the advantages he derived from the instructions of the Rev. Thomas P. Irving, by whom he was prepared to enter the junior class at Princeton, at the age of sixteen, where he afterwards graduated with the highest honours. He studied law in his native town with Francis Xavier Martin, now a distinguished judge in Louisiana, and was admitted to practice at the age of twenty. He was elected at twenty-one to the Senate of the State, and soon became conspicuous for talents, influence, and usefulness. In 1808 he was one of the electors for President and Vice-President, and in 1813 a member of Congress, to which station he was again elected.

After the year 1817, his sphere of usefulness was limited to his own State, where, at the bar, in the Legislature, in the Convention to amend the Constitution, and upon the bench of the Supreme Court, he was always in action, always strenuous for the right, to the end of his virtuous and patriotic life.

He died at Raleigh, on the 23d of January last, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, beloved, revered, and lamented. In him, said Mr. Dillingham, there was a rare combination of great talents and great virtues. With genius, learning, and eloquence, he united sound judgment, practical good sense, and untiring industry. He was a ripe scholar, a sound lawyer, an able statesman, an accomplished gentleman, and a Christian in the best sense of the word.

A conversation took place on the subject of the recent action of the Comptrollers of the Public Schools, in regard to mounting the transit instrument at the High School, in which Mr. Walker, Professor Hart, Mr. Smith, and Dr. Hays, participated.